

Wheatley Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 27th MARCH 2017 IN THE MERRY BELLS HALL AT 7.30pm

Councillors: P Bignell, R Bell, J Carr, S Coleridge, P Gregory, R Harding, P Hood, G Stephens, I Roberts, P Willmott

Officer: The Assistant Clerk

Also present: Karen McKenzie (Headteacher, Wheatley Primary Academy), Liz Wickens (Community Governor), David Locke (Chief Operating Officer, Oxford Diocese Schools Trust)

152. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Cllrs A Davies, T Davies

153. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Willmott as a member of the Wheatley Playing Field Trust.

154. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 6th MARCH 2017 – were agreed as a correct and accurate record.

155. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO LITTLEWORTH ROAD PLAYING FIELD

Cllr Willmott gave a report on behalf of the Littleworth Road field sub-committee about the history of the field and of the recent positive meeting held with the primary school and diocese to find a mutual way forward to increase community use.

The Headteacher reported:

- previous experience of the benefits of a multi-use field and she would like the school to build stronger community links in Wheatley
- MK Watts who maintain the school's field would continue to charge the same amount for the maintaining the whole field this year to keep costs down

Liz Wickens reported on the options identified:

1. Offer of a sub-lease for seven years to the Council for an area of just under half the field.
 - the Council would be free to organise use of this portion of the field but would be entirely responsible for the maintenance of it
 - renegotiation to take place after seven years
2. No involvement from the Council.
3. Joint management of the whole field by setting up a trust to oversee management.
 - the trust would be made up of representatives from the Council, ODST and other community bodies such as sports clubs

- would require commitment to fund grass and tree maintenance and other leisure/community uses on an individual basis.
- the trust would be able to fundraise for individual projects

Cllr Carr asked for clarification as to whether a decision would be taken this evening as the wording on the agenda did not include this. The Vice-Chairman agreed that the wording did not cover this and that it would be necessary to have a resolution for a decision to be made after all the reports and discussion had been completed.

David Locke thanked the members of the Littleworth field sub-committee for their work. He reported:

- the trust would be able to apply for grants
- the set-up costs of forming a trust would be capped at a maximum of £2,500 for the Council, the remaining costs would be paid by ODST
- ODST would project manage to a timetable and liaise with solicitors

Cllr Wilmott reported that the Littleworth Field Sub-committee were in agreement in recommending option 3 to the Council. He confirmed that the field maintenance costs for the Council would be 20% which is the same as the previous OCC/School arrangement.

Cllr Gregory asked about the tree maintenance costs. Cllr Hood reported:

- that a tree survey was undertaken a year ago.
- some work has been completed, the next work to be done is estimated at £7,000
- this work is necessary to ensure the safety of the users of the field and would be carried out regardless of whether the lease is taken or a trust is formed
- if the village green application had been successful, the Council would have been responsible for all the tree maintenance

Cllr Carr expressed concern about what the field would be used for to justify the expenditure to the community. Cllr Hood replied that the trust would be informed by the stakeholders, the Neighbourhood Plan and canvassing of residents as to the use. Cllr Coleridge added that a youth shelter is still needed by the young people of the village.

The Vice-Chairman sought the approval of the meeting that it was in order to proceed to a vote bearing in mind the wording of the original agenda item. This was **agreed** unanimously.

After much further discussion, Cllr Bell proposed:

1. "That this council agrees to withdraw its request and agreement for a seven-year lease for part of the playing field at Littleworth Road as approved by this Council in March 2016."

Cllr Bignell seconded this proposal. There were 9 votes for, 1 abstention. This was **agreed**.

2. "That this Council formally accepts the Diocese's suggestion to form a separate trust and to develop and manage the field to the benefit of the whole village community, including of course the school, and that councillors already named should have the

authority to act as our representatives on this body, reporting back to this Council on a regular basis. This will include requests for money."

Cllr Bignell seconded this proposal. There were 8 votes for, 2 abstentions. This was **agreed**.

156. TO CONSIDER A DISPOSAL POLICY FOR DOCUMENTS KEPT IN THE PARISH OFFICE

- Currently, the Council do not have a policy for the retention and disposal of documentation.
- Cllr Willmott reported Cllr Newman is looking into companies who can scan documents and the costs of this and it is also advisable for the Council to consider possible external storage options
- Cllr Bell pointed out that, for planning, it is practical to keep paper copies of the last three years of planning documents. Older plans can be accessed on the SODC Planning website.

After further discussion, the Assistant Clerk was asked to contact SODC and ask for a copy of their retention and disposal policy.

157. TO CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT OF A SOLICITOR TO SECURE OWNERSHIP BY THE VILLAGE OF:

- i) the land at the rear of Barlow Close over which the footpath from Cooper Close runs**
- ii) the land adjacent to the High Street currently known as 'The Village Square'**

- Cllr Stephens explained item (ii) was prompted by the problems of trying to establish who owned the land when a tree fell down there
- some councillors were concerned that they did not know exactly where the footpath in item (ii) was located and would like clarification
- Cllr Gregory expressed concern about the costs of maintaining the trees and fixing the lights along the path if the land was purchased
- Cllr Bell reported that OCC were supposed to adopt the footpath but this had not happened

It was **agreed** that plans of the Coopers Close footpath should be produced and the items to be on the next Full Council Agenda.

158. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 8th May 2017 - Noted

Cllr Hood thanked the Council for their support for the Littleworth Playing Field Option 3.

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm